SPECIAL FEATURE SECTION

New-York Tribune

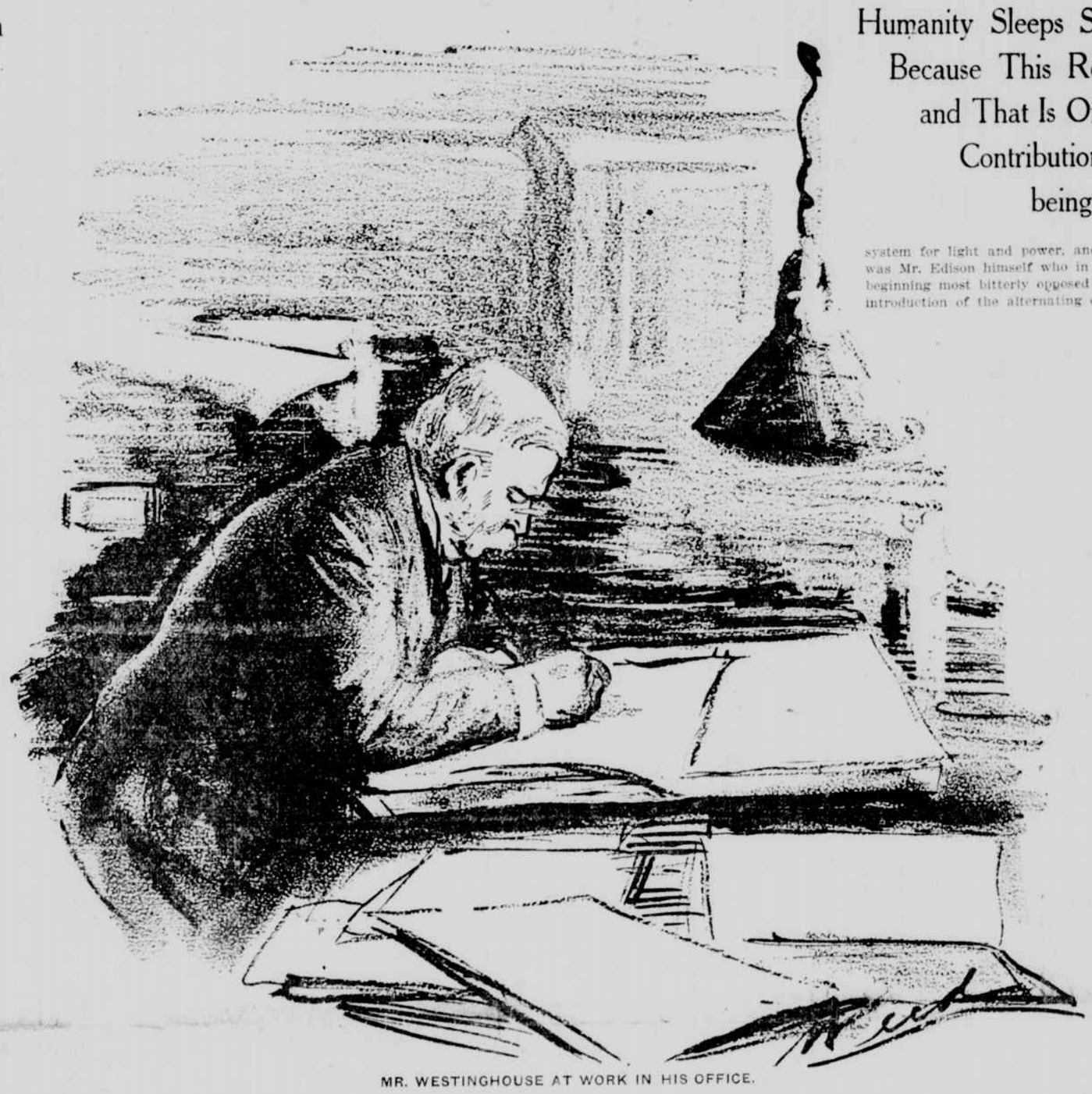
SPECIAL FEATURE SECTION

PART V. EIGHT PAGES. NEW-YORK, SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 1914. PART V. EIGHT PAGES.

THE WORLD GAVE WESTINGHOUSE MILLIONS, YET REMAINS HIS DEBTOR

The "Vital Unrest" Which Brought Him Fame at Twenty-five Urged Him On to Fresh Achievement Constantly—Incidents of His Life Told by a Longtime Comrade.

Humanity Sleeps Safely at a Mile a Minute Because This Remarkable Man Lived—and That Is Only One of His Many Contributions to the Well-being of the Race.



MR. WESTINGHOUSE AT WORK IN HIS OFFICE.

THROUGH George Westinghouse all the world is speeded up. We are whirling round in comparative safety because of the air-brake. Because we know the brakes can be clamped down, we permit the porter to make the bed so that we lie with our heads toward a head-on collision. The engineer opens the throttle and the world snores. In the words of the poet, we hog the whole highway. And the vital unrest of George Westinghouse caused him to invent 200 other things—all good. The things that he invented worked, which is a good thing, but they were things that were needed. His mind was fertile in the discovery of modes for adding to the comfort of mankind. For innumerable difficulties he had a contrivance. That is one reason why he inspired large masses of human beings with confidence and attachment.

But, more than this, mankind loved Westinghouse. Which is a good deal to say in these days about a man who was the force in an industrial enterprise representing $200,000,000. All regarded him with unmingled admiration as a man of heart and virtue and punch. Long before Broadway heard of the punch Mr. Westinghouse was using it in his business. His ability was never questioned. The great scientist, Lord Kelvin, once said that in "character and achievement" Westinghouse was "one of the great men of our time."

CREATIVE ABILITY A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

He employed fifty thousand persons, but was far too noble a man to look on his vast enterprise merely as a buccaneer would look on a galleon. Therefore he did not feel hunted and discouraged as some other business men have, especially in the last few years when considerable opposition has arisen to the oldtime belief in the divine right of money.

"Many years ago, while walking through the cemetery at Mount Vernon," said the vice-president of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company to the writer last week, "where are buried companions with whom Mr. Westinghouse served in the Civil War, I chanced to ask him why he did not rest from his activities, having already accomplished vastly more than most men during their whole lives.

"He replied in effect that he felt that he had been given a certain ability to create industries in which his fellowmen could find profitable and congenial work, and that it was his duty to continue to exercise such powers, that it would not be right for him to cease from such endeavors so long as health and strength permitted.

"The acquisition of greater wealth was not his motive," added the vice-president. "Already he possessed all that could be desired in that direction, and creating additional industries meant only more care and greater responsibilities, coupled with the grave possibility of diminishing rather than increasing his income."

HIS INTERVIEW WITH COMMODORE VANDERBILT.

One of the most popular stories of the early struggles of George Westinghouse relates to that interview with Commodore Vanderbilt, the greatest living railroad man of the period. Young Westinghouse, so the story goes, had tried to get the superintendent of the New York Central Railroad to try his airbrake. The superintendent declined. At last he got permission to explain his airbrake to Commodore Vanderbilt. Westinghouse was himself so thoroughly convinced of the merit of his invention that he was sure if he had the opportunity of explaining it Commodore Vanderbilt would immediately order every car of the New York Central road to be equipped with it.

The interview took place in Commodore Vanderbilt's New York office. Mr. Westinghouse spoke and Commodore Vanderbilt listened. At last the old man asked: "Do you mean to tell me you can stop a railroad train by wind?"

"Well, yes; inasmuch as air is wind, I suppose you are right," said the inventor. Then the great railroad man said something like this:

"I have no time to waste on fools," and the interview was ended.

It is an interesting story, and Mr. Westinghouse found it was useless to try to kill it. It wasn't the killable kind. But Mr. Westinghouse always said there was not a word of truth in it, and he was among those present when he had the interview with the Commodore. It is almost as good as if it were true, because the moral of the tale is that young Westinghouse kept on going.

THE SAVING OF MANY LIVES BY AIRBRAKES.

At a dinner in Washington given to the members of the International Railway Congress, in May, 1905, a diplomat, in speaking on the subject of the importance of railway brakes, said he felt safe in saying the airbrake had saved more lives than any general had ever lost in a great battle. Equally difficult would be the attempt to estimate the number of lives saved through Mr. Westinghouse's human airbrakes, his introduction into this country of the Saturday half-holiday.

The banjo, in Kipling's great poem, claims the credit for drawing the "world together link by link," but what actually does the job if we confine ourselves to prose is rapid transit. Wherever rapid transit links the world the Westinghouse airbrake is in use.

He was a hero of a romance in real life. Famous at twenty-five, fortune began to yield to him, and yet it required the black reaper to stop him from working at sixty-seven. His work was of the greatest value to everybody, and he worked continually, because he had taste for little else. When things went hardest with him he worked hardest, putting the world more and more in his debt.

His genius was comprehensive. At once he was a great inventor and remarkable organizer. He was always successful, and no money was ever more fairly earned, but his fortune was incidental. Money was only one of his totals. Some years ago he sold a property which he had built up and for which he had no further use and cleared $3,000,000.

"That will give me a little ready cash to carry on such and such experiments," he said next morning at breakfast.

The experiments resulted in establishing new lines of industry. There are now between thirty-five and forty Westinghouse companies in Europe and America.

George Westinghouse was born on October 6, 1846, at Central Bridge, N. Y., and in 1856 the family moved to Schenectady, where his father, who also was gifted as an inventor, established the Schenectady Agricultural Works.

The vice-president of the Westinghouse company tells a story of the boyhood of the great inventor, which shows that he was born with dogged pertinacity and even as a youth would stick to his views in the face of ridicule and protest.

THE THREE BROTHERS AND CANDLE INCIDENT.

The rule of the Westinghouse boys was that the last one to get into bed must blow out the candle. There were three boys who occupied the one room. One night George was the last to get into bed, but it was pretty cold, and for that or some other reason best known to himself he didn't blow out the light. The brothers objected. George only cuddled up into a more comfortable position beneath the bedclothes, and remained obdurate to all entreaties to get from under and blow out the candle. Finally, the other two boys thought they would get even and they crept quietly out of bed, picked up the candle and tiptoed with it over to George's bed, intending to scorch the end of his nose. When they reached that point George blew out the candle before it did any damage. It is said to be the only time that he did blow it out.

The boy attended the public schools, but he was a born inventor, and before he was sixteen he put together a type of rotary engine, and very soon after this he stood successfully the examination for the position of assistant engineer in the navy. He was still working on that engine when he died. Recently, at a Fifth avenue dinner, he suddenly broke off a conversation, became preoccupied, and finally produced a note pad on which he began to sketch. To the inquiry of a friend he explained that he was recording an idea that had come to him in connection with the rotary engine.

THE CIVIL WAR—HE ENLISTS AT SEVENTEEN.

When the Civil War came on he was all for enlisting, but he was much too young. He was only seventeen, younger, of course, than the age for the enlistment of combatants. The authorities thought him older than he was, and George didn't say anything about the matter. He was large for his age.

He was with the 12th N. Y., N. G., for thirty days, beginning in June, 1863. In November he re-enlisted for three years in the 16th New York Cavalry, in which he served for a year, being honorably discharged as a corporal. He was then appointed, in December, 1864, third assistant engineer in the navy, and reported for duty on the Muscoota. He found time between bullets to invent a multiple cylinder engine.

At the end of the war he resisted solicitations to remain in the navy. They felt that his head would be useful to the service. He wanted to pursue his studies, and for a year he did so at Union College, in Schenectady. But his was not the nature to delight in the quiet of the classroom, and he went to the president, who was sympathetic, and after telling him how he felt about it the young man decided to jump into active life. He said he felt the need for room to turn around in. And he wanted to marry Miss Margaret Erskine Walker, which he did two months before he was twenty-one, possessing no resources to aid him except the resources within himself.

MANY HONORS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Years ago Union College made him Ph. D.; a President of France enrolled him in the Legion of Honor; King Humbert conferred upon him the Order of the Iron Crown of Italy; King Leopold decorated him, and hundreds of scientific societies here and abroad have conferred honors upon him. Only two years ago he received the Edison gold medal of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, an honor that scarcely could have been more welcome, as the medal was presented because of Mr. Westinghouse's great service in connection with the development of the alternating current system for light and power, and it was Mr. Edison himself who in the beginning most bitterly opposed the introduction of the alternating current.

About the time of his marriage Mr. Westinghouse invented a railroad frog, which appealed to railroad men at once. He went to Pittsburgh to make arrangements for its manufacture, and there became acquainted with Andrew Carnegie, Robert Pitcairn, of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Ralph Baggaley. All were young men, and Mr. Westinghouse became their companion. In that city he also met, in a boarding house, a young man who was studying for the ministry, and they became intimate friends. That man is the Rev. Dr. S. J. Fisher, of Pittsburgh, who delivered the funeral address at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in this city on March 14.

EXPERIMENTS IN 1866 WITH STEAM BRAKE.

The idea of the air brake was in his mind in these days. He began experiments in 1866 with a brake operated by steam. He was returning to Schenectady from Troy one night when he witnessed a bad train wreck—a head-on collision on a piece of straight track. He was on one of his frog selling trips at the time. The danger had been seen by the engineers, but the hand brakes could not be set in time to avert the disaster. The brakemen, tugging at their brakes, did their best, but the best of hand brakes were primitive affairs, and in emergencies usually useless.

Mr. Westinghouse conceived the idea of instantly braking an entire train with some form of power controlled by the engineer in his cab. His first thought was an automatic brake attached to the couplers. This soon proved impracticable. Then he tried steam. But a test convinced him that here, too, he was working along impractical lines. By the time steam was sent from the engineer's cab to the brakes it had lost all power. At this point came Fate. Paul Latzke tells the story, as follows:

WHAT HAPPENED ON A BLAZING AUGUST DAY.

"The sun of an August noonday was blazing with a heat so intense that man was prostrate. In the Westinghouse Agricultural Works, in Schenectady, all activity was hushed. Many of the men were away at dinner; in the little wooden office that stood a few rods from the works the clerks yawned with exhaustion. At one of the desks, however, was a mind the steaming heat could not subdue. Then, as always, Westinghouse could and did outwork many men. Every day but Sunday was a working day, and every day was long.

"On this day, as usual, he was putting in the noon hour at his father's office, working out his brake plans. Immersed at his labors he was suddenly startled by the appearance at his side of a little girl.

"'Won't you take it, please?' she

Continued on fourth page.

HE ENLISTED IN THE 12TH NEW YORK REGIMENT AT SEVENTEEN.

"I HAVE IT!" HE EXCLAIMED.